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SELA Meeting Condemns U.S. Trade Policy

PA0208202189 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 1929 GMT 2 Aug 89

[Text] Cartagena, Colombia, 2 Aug (DPA)—The Latin American and Caribbean countries have condemned the trade policy implemented in recent months by the United States, which has imposed sanctions on some nations of the region, it was reported here today.

At the 15th meeting of the Latin American Economic System (SELA), the foreign ministers of the SELA member states approved a communique in which they make serious charges against Washington, which has followed policies that "ignore" foreign trade principles and regulations.

The participants in the SELA meeting, which ends today, said that under a "special legislation" drawn up in May, the Bush administration compiled a list of countries—including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Venezuela—and classified them as being under "observation," while two others, Brazil and Mexico, were listed as being under "priority observation." According to the United States, the measures were adopted to ensure effective protection of patents.

The SELA also discussed the position of the United States, which has said that if no positive results are achieved through the bilateral negotiations and consultations to modify Latin American patent, trade, and foreign investment policies, several nations of the continent might be subject to unilateral sanctions.

In light of this, the foreign ministers and experts of the 26 SELA member countries said the U.S. decisions "further weaken the foundations of the multilateral trade system, ignoring the principles and regulations of the GATT."

According to the SELA communique, "this violates the commitment not to introduce trade restrictions that would help a country's negotiating position or that contravene the provisions of the GATT, as established in the Punta del Este declaration issued after the Uruguay Round of GATT talks."

In its Cartagena meeting, the SELA warned that the recent events "place in doubt the possibility of achieving a greater opening of trade barriers and the expansion of trade to the benefit of the developing countries." The communique condemning the United States concluded by saying the U.S. actions "cause serious harm to our economies and create uncertainty in trade."

Meeting Ends, Resolution Issued

PA0308022289 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0032 GMT 3 Aug 89

[Text] Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), 2 Aug (EFE)—Colombian Foreign Minister Julio Londono, who today presided over and closed the 15th SELA Council Meeting, emphasized afterward that "Latin American unity has been strengthened."

Londono said that "the unity of Latin America and the Caribbean has been protected, and trust is again reborn among our countries with faith and hope." He added that, following this council meeting, the countries in the region will "advance more united toward true integration."

The Colombian foreign minister thanked the foreign ministers and delegates of the 26 SELA member countries for their presence in Cartagena de Indias, and insisted on the need for Latin American and Caribbean unity. Londono emphasized that "an era of change" looms ahead in the area, adding that "we are proud of the unity we have shown."

The next SELA meeting will be held in 1990 in Venezuela, while the one after that will be held in Mexico in 1991. The 15th SELA Ministerial Council today concluded its deliberations approving 13 decisions and issuing a communique in which it rejects the U.S. commerce and intellectual property law, also known as the "bus law." It also turned down Panama's proposal to include a resolution condemning the "coercive measures" of the United States against the country.

The approved agreements include one that asks the organization's permanent secretariat to prepare a draft foreign debt proposal from the countries in the area. The SELA Ministerial Commission will meet in November in Caracas to analyze the draft proposal, which will be presented at the SELA heads of state summit, scheduled for the first quarter of 1990.

The permament secretariat was also asked to prepare a report on the impact the evolution of the foreign debt problem and some proposals suggested for negotiation would have—in the short- and mid-term—on the regional economy.

Londono explained to EFE that "each country has its own foreign debt negotiation terms" and, therefore, the solutions to the foreign debt problem are different. He added that the "minimum point of consensus concerning an agreement" is based on the fact that all the countries in the area "are aware" that regional foreign debt—more than $440 billion—"is no longer an economic problem and has become a political problem."

Likewise, SELA approved plans for its members to sponsor and support the secretariat's participation, as an observer, in the acting IMF and World Bank committees' meetings. Furthermore, Bruce A. Morrison, chairman of the U.S. Congress foreign debt board, sent a communique to the 15th SELA council and stated that "the overall handling of the foreign debt cannot be left exclusively in the private sector's hands."

The U.S. congressman believes it is wise for creditor governments to participate in the overall discussions and solutions to the foreign debt, which he termed as one of the "most critical problems at the international level."

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Ministers Approve Contra Demobilization Plan

PA0408141389 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1308 GMT 4 Aug 89

[Text] Guatemala City, 4 Aug (ACAN)—Early this morning in Guatemala City, the Central American foreign ministers approved a nine-point agenda, including the demobilization of the Nicaraguan contras, which is one of the essential issues for discussion by the area presidents at the upcoming presidential summit to be held in Tela, Honduras, this weekend. This was announced by Guatemalan Foreign Minister Mario Palencia at the end of a meeting which lasted almost 20 hours.

The Salvadoran guerrilla issue will be discussed at a foreign ministers meeting scheduled for tomorrow, 5 August, a few hours before the presidential summit is expected to begin.

The nine points approved by the five Central American foreign ministers are as follows:

1. The plan for the demobilization, repatriation, and relocation of the Nicaraguan contras currently located in Honduras.

2. The verification of the fulfillment of commitments made by the Central American presidents at the meetings in Esquipulas (Guatemala), Alajuela (Costa Rica), and Costa del Sol (El Salvador).

3. The follow-up of the progress made by the region's countries in political matters.

4. The verification, control, and follow-up of security matters.

5. The area countries' economic situation and the foreign debt problem.

6. The eradication of drug trafficking in Central America.

7. The problem involving the refugees and displaced people in the area.

8. Environment and [sentence as received]

9. The Central American parliament, whose formation has already been approved by the legislative assemblies of all the Central American countries, with the exception of Costa Rica.

Foreign Minister Palencia—appointed by the rest of the Central American foreign ministers to be in charge of informing the press of the results of the 2-day meeting held in Guatemala—emphasized that great "progress" had been made during the meeting and that only the new issue of the demobilization of El Salvador's Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) remains pending.

"The technical commission appointed by the Central American foreign ministers to draft the agenda was able to make progress with regard to the aforementioned nine points; however, progress was not made with regard to the Salvadoran proposal, which will be discussed tomorrow, 5 August, in Honduras."

It was reported that the Salvadoran delegation insisted on proposing that the demobilization of the Salvadoran rebel forces be conducted jointly with the demobilization of the Nicaraguan contras, a proposal which has been the central point of discussion between the Nicaraguan and the Salvadoran delegations.

According to the Guatemalan, Costa Rican, and Honduran delegations, El Salvador's plan to demobilize the FMLN guerrillas "is legitimate," because El Salvador shares with Nicaragua "the right to seek peace in its territory."

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto said that the Salvadoran Government has the right to present a plan, "but not a plan for demobilization, because the contra problem is different from that of the FMLN."

D'Escoto pointed out that the contras attack Nicaragua from bases inside Honduras, while the Salvadoran guerrillas are fighting in Salvadoran territory and that "therefore a demobilization plan is inapplicable in El Salvador's case."

According to Salvadoran Foreign Minister Manuel Pacas, the meeting resulted in progress regarding the proposal he presented, "because the other foreign ministers recognized the need to reach an agreement that could bring peace to my country."

The Central American foreign ministers will resume their talks on the Salvadoran issue on Saturday, 5 August. The Salvadoran issue will ultimately be discussed by the Central American presidents at the presidents' summit, which will begin in the Honduran port city of Tela on Sunday, 6 August.

Arias Meets With FMLN, URNG Before Summit

PA0608131489 Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish 0415 GMT 5 Aug 89

[Text] San Jose, 4 Aug (REUTER)—Costa Rican President Oscar Arias held meetings with a number of leading Central American figures prior to the Central American presidential summit scheduled to begin this morning in the port city of Tela, Honduras.

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Panamanian Delegate Asks OAS for 'Protection'

PA2408153889 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1235 GMT 24 Aug 89

[Speech by Panamanian Government representative Dr Romulo Escobar Bethancourt at the 21st OAS Foreign Ministers Consultative Meeting in Washington "at dawn" on 24 August—recorded]

[Text] Mr President: I wish to start my speech by reiterating our recognition in Panama to the commission appointed by the OAS so that we Panamanians, through our own mechanisms, can reach national accord via an agreement to improve our country's domestic political situation. I personally, as the representative to the dialoque of the Panamanian president and the Panama Defense Forces [FDP], want to state before the OAS that, in our opinion, the OAS secretary general; Ecuadoran Foreign Minister Cordovez, president of the commission; and the foreign ministers of Trinidad and Tobago and Guatemala did an outstanding job. They gained our appreciation because at all times they tried to help, and at all times they also respected Panama and did not meddle in Panama's internal affairs. They respected my country's right to self-determination and publicly declared that their role in Panama was not to impose or decide on situations, but instead to aid in finding a peaceful and democratic solution.

We wish to stress this because just as the OAS took a very delicate step by meeting to hear the affairs of a small country that is under attack but bent on fighting to the bitter end to maintain its sovereignty and its right to be respected, this same OAS, risking the possibility that its action could appear as an intervention in the internal affairs of a country, thus violating its very own charter, nevertheless took the chance and was able to complete its mission, casting aside any doubts and all apprehensions. We, who were able to see and live through this, wish to especially stress this before the OAS members here, who with sacrifice are spending their time in dealing with problems in our country. They are thus contributing to gradually finding a solution and are also helping so that Panama's problems may become known to others in a true light and not the way the United States portrays them.

You should know that the Executive Branch of Panama, the FDP, and the parties comprising the organization called COLINA, the National Liberation Coalition, agreed at all times with the OAS goals concerning Panama. That is why we proposed during the dialogue that we comply with the provisions stated in Paragraph 5 of the declaration issued by the chairman of the 21st Foreign Ministers Consultative Meeting on 19 July 1989 in Washington. As a result of the resolution and in accordance with national interests, we began the proposal by invoking the provisions of the chairman's resolution. We wanted to emphasize the great similarity between the OAS interest in solving Panama's problem in a peaceful and democratic way, and the intention of our government, our FDP, and our parties to find precisely that peaceful and democratic solution.

We proposed the creation of a provisional government with broad participation starting on 1 September. Those who wished to create the impression that the Panamanian Government or its FDP opposes the installation of a government that includes the participation of the different groups in the country received a flat refusal that is endorsed by the presence, testimony, experience, and debates that were heard by the distinguished representatives of the organization who attended the dialogue.

We stated that the Panamanian Government and its FDP were aware that it was necessary to attain the Panamanian people's national unity, that it was necessary to end the political rift prevailing among us, which has precluded a peaceful solution because it is encouraged by foreign hands. We said we specifically proposed—without subterfuge, without beating around the bush, without twisting the facts, but by following the OAS spirit—the creation of that government of broad representation with all the political groups of the country on 1 September, and we mentioned precisely that date.

In addition, the OAS pointed out in its statement that free elections should be held as soon as practicable. We did not want to debate whether a supranational organization could tell a particular country when it should hold elections. We did not want to debate this because such a legal and political discussion would have distorted the spirit in which the OAS approved the suggestion that Panama should find a peaceful and democratic formula to solve its problems. In other words, we thought that the fact that the OAS was sponsoring a democratic solution in Panama outweighed the doubtful profit of a legal and political discussion. However right our position had been, this discussion would have defeated the purpose for which it had been approved.

Reflecting the OAS stance, we pointed out in our proposal that a provisional government should be installed and that this provisional government should be entrusted with the task of organizing free elections as soon as possible. In other words, we did not even try to change the OAS phrase. We reproduced the OAS words verbatim to highlight the complete agreement between the intent of the Panamanian Government, its Defense Forces, and the COLINA parties, and the statement made by the president of this meeting. In this proposal, we pointed out several facts about the aggression taking place against us. We will detail these facts later.

We expanded our proposal when we saw that the sectors talking with us during that debate apparently did not regard the proposal as sufficient. In our expansion, we said a provisional government should be made up by one representative from COLINA, one from ADOC [Civic Democratic Opposition Alliance], and one from the other important forces in our national life. We wanted to make the proposal even more specific so that there would be no doubt as to what sector we were referring to

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